

PATIENT INFORMATION:

After prostate surgery, men can have problems with bladder control (the bladder can leak urine unexpectedly). This is because the 'internal sphincter' muscle at the base of the bladder, which helps to control urine flow, is disrupted when the prostate gland is removed. But there is a 'back-up system' – the 'external sphincter' and the muscles of the pelvic floor – which can be trained for a bigger role in bladder control. Scott, Danielle and Jemma are experts in training male pelvic floor muscles.



THE PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AT ACTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY MACKAY

Our Physios keep up to date on the latest research and most effective assessment and treatment options for their patients.

We are the preferred providers by the Wesley prostate unit for the Mackay region. Recent research into the use of transperineal ultrasound means that we can evaluate which muscles of the pelvic floor are being correctly activated to improve continence (being dry). The small muscles at the base of the urethra (wee tube) are most effective, however, are often over powered by the large puborectalis "bottom squeezing" muscle.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT ACTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY MACKAY

Research shows that pre-operative pelvic floor exercise shortens the duration of incontinence post prostate surgery. It is preferable to have pelvic floor ultrasound training 2-4 weeks before your operation. You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire about your bladder, bowel and sexual symptoms.

The one one-hour physiotherapy appointment will normally provide all the information and training in pelvic floor exercise needed before surgery. This will involve leaving on your underwear (brief jocks work best) while you pull across the elastic (moving your testes to the side). The scanner is held under the testes / above the anus, while the physio asks you to contract, relax, breath and watch the screen for feedback. The pelvic floor muscles are scanned on ultrasound and seeing the muscles active on the screen can be a real confidence-booster.

Pre-operative physiotherapy gives your muscles time to develop without the added complications of swelling or neurological deficiencies following surgery.

AFTER SURGERY

A follow up appointment is made for a 30-minute physiotherapy review 1-2 weeks after catheter removal (the catheter is usually in for 7 days). Men may be asked to complete a 'bladder and pad-weight diary' and a questionnaire for this appointment to help assess bladder control. An individual home exercise program is provided. Ongoing physiotherapy support and training aims to help men achieve complete bladder control as soon as possible. The exercises can also assist with erectile function.

WHY PHYSIOTHERAPY IS IMPORTANT

Education is provided about the pelvic floor muscles and training in how to activate them correctly. Without individualised instruction and testing, it's a bit like trying to learn to swing a golf club from a brochure – we wouldn't expect it to work and getting a coach is best! We provide the necessary coaching to exercise the pelvic floor muscles correctly. With the help of ultrasound-guided biofeedback, men can be reassured that their pelvic floor muscles are working correctly and feel confident about practising the exercises at home. Other symptoms such as pain, curvature of the penis, erectile dysfunction, urinary urgency and constipation can also be addressed. Return to general exercise should also be graduated.

BLADDER CONTROL AFTER SURGERY

It is not possible to predict who will have problems with bladder control after prostate surgery or how long it will take to regain control. Some men have good bladder control within a week or two of the catheter coming out. For others it can take longer, but most achieve control 6 months after surgery. We teach men the correct technique and the skills of pelvic floor muscle control to speed up the recovery process. After surgery we provide ongoing support and training to achieve the best possible bladder control, including advice on rest, work, and health- such as diet and avoiding constipation, and guide you on your return to an active lifestyle.

